

October is Domestic Violence Prevention Month in the Army

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Although domestic violence and abuse has existed for centuries, it was not until the 1970s that it has been considered a social problem of epidemic proportions. Since then, much has been learned about the nature of violence and abuse within the family, including the risk factors and consequences of the violence. In the U.S. Army, **domestic violence** is defined as a criminal offense under the United States Code, the Uniform Code of Military Justice that involves the use violence against a person within the family environment. Further, the U.S. Army defines **domestic abuse** as a pattern of behavior, including violence, which results in emotional/psychological abuse, economic control, and/or interference with personal liberty that is directed toward a current or former spouse, or intimate partner with a common domicile, or person who shares parental responsibilities.

Every October the United States and military community worldwide celebrates Domestic Violence Prevention Month. This month is devoted to the prevention of domestic violence with the 2006 theme “Stand Up to Prevent Domestic Abuse”. It is during this month that community education programs will highlight ways to prevent domestic violence and abuse. Varied and diverse activities will be held all across the military community in Japan that will provide public awareness, coordinated community education, and connection between organizations that work to end violence in the home.

Realizing that families in our contemporary society are under a great deal of stress, the following are some ways to prevent domestic violence from occurring in your home:

- Decide within your family that violence will not be tolerated. It's your home, so make the rules as a family. Family conflicts are better resolved by talking things over.
- Take the time to calm down when arguing. Attempt to resolve conflicts through talking; however, when an argument begins to escalate, it is time to take a break.
- Always be aware that your children learn from what they hear, see, and experience. Be the best example possible as you are their primary mentors and molding their foundation for life.
- Verbal arguments can easily escalate into situations we later regret. Don't be afraid to get help if you and your spouse are having difficulties with conflict resolution. It is not always possible to solve your differences on your own, and asking for help is a sign of maturity.

The efforts of the Army to campaign against domestic violence and abuse are changing our perceptions of this long-standing social problem. Domestic violence is viewed as counter to the greater good within the Army community. For more information or to receive assistance, please call the Behavioral Health Clinic, Family Advocacy Program at 263-4610 or visit us in Building 502.

